

## The Closure of the ‘Gold Window’: From ‘Camera-Eye’ to ‘Brain-Screen’

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The outer machine (the cinema as industry) and the inner machine (the spectator’s psychology) are not just metaphorically related, the latter a facsimile of the former... It [the inner machine] occupies one of the essential positions in the circulation of money, the turnover of capital without which films could no longer be made. (Metz 1982, 8)

The cinema as art itself lives in relation with a permanent plot, an international conspiracy that conditions it from within, as the most intimate and most indispensable enemy. This conspiracy is that of money; what defines industrial art is not mechanical reproduction, but the internalized relation with money. (Deleuze 1989, 77)

In his 1997 essay ‘Culture and Finance Capital’ Fredric Jameson suggestively wrote that any ‘new theory of finance capitalism would need to reach out into the expanded realm of cultural production and map its effects’ (143). In the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, finance capitalism and its broader cultural effects are increasingly becoming the target of some of the most contentious debates in public discourse, as a new generation of activists is challenging the hegemony of Wall Street, its enormous wealth, and its seeming control over political processes and social futures. However, we seem only to be in the nascent stages of the task that Jameson set before us over decade ago, namely mapping—theoretically, historically, and politically—the relationship between finance and culture. Following Jameson’s dictate, this essay returns to seminal discourses on the organization of power and subjectivity within the cinematic image written during the latter part of the Twentieth Century in an effort to identify what these texts might be able to tell us about broader cultural transformations at work in and through the cinema. In particular, by examining the relationship between systemic macroeconomic transformations and theories of the cinematic subject being written in the midst of these upheavals, this essay is part of a broader project that seeks to theorize cinema’s internalized relationship to money, and thus to the process of financialization as such.

On August 15, 1971, when Richard Nixon permanently ended the terms of the Bretton Woods agreement by removing the dollar, and thus the entire world, from the gold standard, his action was widely referred to as ‘the closing of the gold window’ (Freiden 2006, 339). A shock to the international monetary system, the collapse of the dollar might be the most

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important event in the history of the twentieth century global economy, indexing a complete transformation in systems of monetary representation. However, the significance of the end of the gold standard far exceeds the sphere of money. ‘The closing of the gold window’ refers not only to the closure of a figurative window through which dollars could be exchanged for gold, but also to the end of an elaborate structure of power based on the removal of a precious metal from circulation in order to ground all monetary value. In this sense, we can also understand the closure of the ‘gold window’ as it relates to the position of the sovereign.<sup>2</sup> The dissolution of the gold standard indicates not only a severing of the value of money from any imaginary relationship to precious metal, but also from the logic of sovereignty in general. The sovereign, the golden bullion, no longer gazes out from the other side of the gold window, seeing the world as a reflection of its image. In this way, unlike theorists such as Giorgio Agamben who understand the logic of sovereign exception to be the deepest structure of biopolitics, I argue that contemporary forms of biopolitical control are based in capitalism’s ability to sever itself from the logic of sovereignty, no longer grounding value in a figure removed from circulation. The exceptional and imaginary state of ‘inclusive exclusion,’ though integral in the monetary system upheld by the gold standard, was dissolved and gold—no longer held in reserve—enters the market as a commodity like any other. Though the transformation of systems of exchange and monetary representation marked by the ‘closure of the gold window’ had been over half a century in the making, Nixon’s action was, nevertheless, indicative of a re-ordering of structures of power and life in late capitalism.

The end of the gold standard is often cited as the birth of postmodernity, and marks a shift away from industrial capitalism and to the growing dominance of financial capitalism, unleashing new forms of production and control.<sup>3</sup> As an industrial art, film and theories of film are intimately tied to this transformation. Both an exemplary historical event and a reordering of systems of value and exchange, the end of the gold standard marks a fissure: the impact of which has not been adequately theorized in the field of aesthetics, particularly film. I take two theories of the cinematic image, Dziga Vertov’s ‘camera eye’ and Gilles Deleuze’s ‘brain screen,’ to be materialist conceptions of film that are emblematic of two distinct formations of capitalist order in the Twentieth Century. These two conceptions of the cinematic image are each ontological theories of perception, the historical stakes of which are rooted on particular formations

<sup>2</sup> It is not coincidental that the coinage worth its weight in gold not only bore the sovereign’s image, but also its name: ‘Sovereign: A gold coin minted in England from the time of Henry VII to Charles I.’ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. [<http://dictionary.oed.com>]. Accessed 25 October 2010.

<sup>3</sup> This argument is made notably by Fredrick Jameson in *Postmodernism: the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Empire* (2000).

of the ordering of life by power. In an attempt to produce a theory of cinematic perception adequate to the politics of life under finance capitalism, I seek to understand a phenomenon perhaps best described by Deleuze himself: the ‘move toward replacing the system of a window and the world outside with one of a computer screen in a closed room’ (1997, 157).

The following is an investigation into several seminal post-war film theorists to illustrate the manner in which film theory has attempted, be it in an unsystematic and roundabout manner, to come to terms with its object’s internalized relationship to money. In doing so, this investigation will also trace the way that perception is organized within the cinematic apparatus. I take the shift from a theory of the camera-eye to the brain-screen presented by Deleuze to be expressive of a similar shift in monetary representation at the end of the Twentieth Century. The life that we find under finance capitalism is an inhuman life that has also worked itself into the deepest tissues of biological matter, and this process occurs at the level of visual and monetary economies simultaneously.

Before turning to Deleuze, however, I will first look to the field of psychoanalytic film theory being developed at the same moment as the transformations in capitalist organization described above were taking place. Grounded in a very particular reading of Lacanian psychoanalysis, continental film theory of the late 1960s and 1970s gained wide currency for several decades following the tumultuous historical moment from which it arose. The phenomenological account of cinematic perception, which utilizes conceptual models of identity and equivalence, offers a reading of the camera-eye which grounds perception in subjective formation. Early innovations in psychoanalytic and apparatus criticism elucidate the manner in which the subject of cinema converges with the subject of money.

Moving through these theoretical models, this essay seeks to track a shifting relationship between cinematic perception and money. In *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, Christian Marazzi argues ‘the financial economy today is pervasive, that is, it spreads across the entire economic cycle, co-existing with it from start to finish. (...) [W]e are in a historical period in which the finances are *consubstantial* with the very production of goods and services’ (2010, 28-9). The impulse that guides my investigation is to begin to analyze the cinematic image within the context of the historical situation that Marazzi describes: a situation in which every moment of production and consumption is shot through with the logic, the temporality, and the *violence* of finance. In essence, the phenomenon I am interested in exploring is one that might best be described as the ‘financialization of the image.’

### **The Camera ‘I’ and the Cinematic Apparatus: Equivalence and Identity in Film Theory**

While addressing an international conference on Apparatus Theory in 1978, Peter Wollen reminds his audience of preeminent film scholars, including Christian Metz, of Vertov's theorization of the 'Camera-Eye.' He argues that the camera-eye offers an understanding of cinematic technology that exceeds any notion of human subjectivity. In a seemingly neutral presentation on the role of technology in the history of the cinematic apparatus, Wollen repeatedly mentions Vertov. His deployment of Vertov in response to a question posed by Metz, however, reveals the underlying stakes of his presentation. Asked by Metz how the technologies of the cinematic apparatus reflect the 'symbolic patterns of the human body,' specifically the 'mirror phase,' Wollen responds:

It is in scientific film that you see the technological developments and possibilities which have simply never been absorbed into the institution of cinema at all, for reasons that relate to anthropomorphism, the constant equation of the camera with the human eye. Someone like Vertov, with his whole idea that the camera-eye is different from and superior to the human eye, allowing a discourse quite other than that of the human imaginary, is obviously reliant on things which happened in scientific film—that is what fascinated him has been largely suppressed (1980, 25).

What is so interesting about Wollen's intervention is that it subtly directs its critique to the institution of film theory as well as the institution of film production. The constant equation of the camera with the human eye, induced and reinforced by the cinematic apparatus, is merely a limited conception of the potentials of film. By reminding a conference full of materialist film scholars that the medium should not necessarily be equated with the anthropomorphic figure, and moreover that this fact has been suppressed, Wollen draws attention to a larger problem. Wollen is pointing to the tension between cinema's status as an ideological and technical medium.

The constant forgetting—meticulously produced by an elaborate technological apparatus—of the fact that the eye of the camera and the human eye are not equivalent is endemic to narrative cinema. This problem of false equivalence, however, seeps into other problems of value. By conducting a kind of numismatics of innovations made within the discipline of film theory in the late 1960s and 1970s, I hope to illustrate that, in speaking of the filmic subject, film theory is, at the same time, coming to terms with its object's internalized relationship to money. That is to say, the inherent structures of value identified with the subject of cinema—drawn from psychoanalysis—are modeled on a logic of the general equivalent that, at the time, is breaking down. The human eye that had acted as the gold standard of cinematic structure gives way to an entirely different mode of interaction between cinema and life.

Jean-Louis Baudry's 1970 essay 'Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus' develops a theory of the filmic subject as an after-effect of the mechanical apparatus that produces the cinematic image. The transcendent subject of cinema, for Baudry, is a location that gives meaning to the barrage of flickering images. He calls this figure the 'eye-subject,' and argues that it is 'the invisible base of artificial perspective' (Baudry 1986, 292). Furthermore, it is the apparatus of projection that produces this subject. This process engenders a situation in which the screen acts as a mirror, inducing identification akin to Lacan's concept of the mirror stage (Baudry 1986, 294). What is most compelling about Baudry's analysis is that the fundamental operation of identification is not with any character on the screen, but rather, with the whole of the technical apparatus: 'the spectator identifies less with what is represented, the spectacle itself, than with what stages the spectacle, makes it seen, obliging him to see what it sees; this is exactly the function taken over by the camera as a sort of relay' (Baudry 1986, 295). Owing its constitution to filmic apparatus, the 'eye-subject' is obliged to offer its attention to the movement of the camera, while at the same time acting as the anchoring point of meaning.

Elaborating on Baudry's theory of the filmic subject, Christian Metz further articulates the equation of the function of the camera with the human eye in *The Imaginary Signifier*. For Metz, the screen itself is not a mirror in that it presupposes an ego that is already formed and capable of being 'exchanged' (1982, 47). Rather, the cinema inaugurates the subject into an apperceptive mode in which the ego identifies with itself as the absent, transcendental, and all-perceiving subject. It is crucial to his schema that the all-perceiving subject is precisely that which is absent, and this absence is the void filled by the spectator. In this sense, the cinema, for Metz, is an odd sort of mirror in that 'the mirror suddenly becomes clear glass' (1982, 45), and consequently, 'this mirror returns us everything but ourselves, because we are wholly outside it' (1982, 47). The spectator's vision is a doubling mechanism for the entire cinematic apparatus, particularly the operations of the camera, hence Metz's understanding of cinematic consciousness: 'I am the camera, which points and yet records' (1982, 51). The eye both doubles the gaze of the camera, but at the same time, grounds the flow of images in a central location, absent from the apparatus that generates it. The attention of the eye developed by narrative cinema, for Metz, dates back to the mode of vision first developed by the theory of perspective in painting. Mechanisms of cinematic technology have been manipulated in order to fulfill this subjective position and realize it beyond the measure of any other apparatus of signification. All of this allows the viewing subject to forget, again, that the human eye and the camera are separate.

However, a tension arises in Metz's thought when he claims that the 'psychical' apparatus of the cinema is 'shaped by certain features of man as animal' (1982, 53). This tension exhibits a constant vacillation between the history of cinema as the fulfillment of an innate desire of human consciousness derived from the underlying biological reality of the human subject at infancy, and the cinematic subject as an extension of a historical model of subjectivity and organization of underlying biological capacities. I would like to side with the later trajectory of his thought that severs, properly, the camera from any essential relationship with the human eye.

Metz's rendering of the cinematic subject actually differs little from Baudry's, save his differentiation between primary and secondary identification. But his observation that the absence of the subject constitutes the viewer, marking both the 'reflection and lack' upon which the cinematic apparatus is dependent leads us back to an even more pressing issue in the study of the subject of cinema: suture. I would like now to look briefly at Jean-Pierre Oudart's 1969 introduction of this concept into the field of Film Studies, 'Cinema and Suture'. The dual operation of suture grounds the cinematic subject in a transcendent model of subjectification by constituting a lack. This lack is, of course, the space that the subject both fills and from which it is differentiated. Focusing on the shot/reverse-shot structure, Oudart explains the operation of suture as a signifying lack that is introduced by the gaze off screen, and is then quickly eradicated by the eye-line match. This cut displaces the 'Absent-One' by someone, in effect both decentering and suturing the subject within the cinematic discourse. This constitutive introduction of the imaginary field, to which both the spectator and the image are indebted, is indicative of the logic of the general equivalent. Oudart introduces the concept of the 'signifying Sum' to act as an anchor for this value:

To make a film always means outlining a field which evokes another field, in which a finger rises to designate—by hiding them—its objects as the signifier of its insignificance, before having them reappear—and die—as a signifying Sum. This signifying Sum, echoed by the absence producing it, does not suggest a plenitude of meaning—which the camera cannot attain immediately, since it is burdened with a lack which must always be satisfied (Oudart 1990, 53).

Both the camera and the subject, in this sense, are indebted to the signifying Sum produced in the operation of the 'Absent-One,' which fixes itself as the ground of meaning by removing itself from circulation.

The purpose of this cursory foray into several of the most influential theorizations of the cinematic subject in the period I am concerned with is to understand what the constitution of this subject can tell us about the use of the camera eye in the organization of human desire around the logic of the

general equivalent. More importantly, however, it illustrates how the constitution of this subject, and thus the whole of the cinematic apparatus, is immanently connected to the circulation of money. As Metz writes in the introduction to *The Imaginary Signifier*:

The outer machine (the cinema as industry) and the inner machine (the spectator's psychology) are not just metaphorically related, the latter a facsimile of the former... It [the inner machine] occupies one of the essential positions in the circulation of money, the turnover of capital without which films could no longer be made (1982, 8).

Though Metz, here, is speaking mostly of the desire that drives one to the cinema to purchase a ticket, acting as a kind of financier of future films and reproducing the entire industry, I would like to push his analysis further. If the 'inner machine' is a facsimile of the film industry, then why is it not also the mode of production in general? Furthermore, if this inner machine is actually a position through which money is circulated, then how can it also be a facsimile, a copy, of that system? In a certain sense, Metz seems to be hinting that the subject of cinema is both a position within and a representation of the circulation of money. I would argue that the subject within the above analyses is both a location through which money is circulated and, more importantly, a duplication of a monetary system of value most adequately found in the logic of the general equivalent. That is to say: when speaking of the subject of cinema, one is also speaking of the subject of money. The equation of the human eye with the camera anchors the cinematic apparatus to a measure of value, and thus meaning. All the images within the movement of the film are fixed, thus allowing the apperceptive, transcendent subject to take the place of the camera. The substitution of one form of vision for another, however, is unstable, as Wollen reminds us. The possibilities for vision produced by the motion picture camera vastly exceed those of human vision, especially as the human eye has been disciplined to read its position within the image from the Renaissance forward. The 'golden mean' is an aesthetic expression of the subject who grounds an image, or in the case of film, the movement of images, in a meaningful whole; it gives value to constituent parts. It seems that the subject of cinema, as it is described by the tradition of psychoanalytic readings of the cinema, is in many ways the revelation and completion of the sovereign 'I' who gazes through the gold window, seeing the world as his reflection. This figure is removed from the world he sees only to have it returned to him as a reflection of himself. At the same time, this subject is also that which lacks, and, like the paper note or the film image, owes an infinite symbolic debt to the 'Absent-One.' However, film contains the potentiality to undo the stability of an image grounded in the 'symbolic patterns of the human body' through its ability to detach cinematic vision from the human eye. In this way, it presents the possibility

to produce not only a ‘reflection’ of life, through the mechanisms of identification, but also introduces a new possibility for the entrance of life itself into the image.

In *The Virtual Window: from Alberti to Microsoft*, Anne Friedberg begins with the renaissance painter Leon Alberti’s rendering of the painting as an ‘open window’ to produce a succinct genealogy of the window as both a metaphor for perception and the organization of a particular form of subjective vision. She notes that the metaphor of the window introduced by renaissance painting engenders a visual regime that operates on several levels:

- (1) a variable rectangular frame, (2) a window as a metaphor for the frame of the painting, (3) the ‘subject’ seen through the frame, (4) the human figure as a standard of measure and as a determinate ‘centric point’, and (5) the immobility of the viewer (Friedberg 2009, 27).

From the inception of the window as visual metaphor in the late Renaissance, we see all the features described of the cinematic apparatus as it is understood by early psychoanalytic theories of film. In this sense, perhaps Metz is correct in arguing that cinema is the quintessential expression of the system of vision imposed by western aesthetics from the Renaissance forward. However, Friedberg’s account of the virtual window problematizes this particular formulation of human vision, and might perhaps point to a tension in the manner in which the human figure is composed in these theories of cinema. Friedberg notes an interesting issue in the translation of Descartes’s description of the camera obscura:

Descartes uses the word *finestre*—window—to describe the hole in the eye—the ‘shutter’ or lens—that lets light through and it focuses into the retina. While most translations of Descartes eliminate the window reference and use another term to describe the opening, I mention it here to underline this key etymological root for the window as a mediating lens to vision (Friedberg 2009, 51).

Friedberg goes on to describe the manner in which this metaphor of the eye as a window in the optic apparatus underlies Descartes’s anxiety about vision and representation. The internal window presents the world as an already-mediated frame of representation, and hence treats visual perception with distrust. It appears that the conflation of the camera eye and the human eye reproduces the same anxiety that Descartes feels. In fact, these conceptions of the cinematic apparatus seem perfectly to extend and replicate the Cartesian schematic. The ‘mirror that becomes clear glass’—human vision conceived of as a mediating window to the world—is treated with a suspicion that recalls Descartes’s own as he interrogates mechanisms of optical trickery in visual perception. The theorists above reinforce the

notion that the human eye is the measure of the cinematic apparatus—described here as almost the revelation of the Cartesian eye—while eliding, perhaps, inhuman or post-human forms of vision.

### **‘Time is money’: The Time-Image and the End of the Gold Standard**

The detachment of the camera from the human eye is an internal tendency of the cinema just as much as the detachment of money from gold is an internal tendency of money in capitalism. Both of these breaks are both precipitated by and induce one thing: crisis. As Deleuze reminds us when writing about the crisis of the movement-image and the birth of the time-image, it is never at the beginning that a thing ‘reveals its essence, what it was from the outset it can reveal only after a detour in its evolution’ (1989, 43). In this section I will further explore the relationship between film and money, but through Gilles Deleuze’s two books on cinema. Specifically, I will look at the connection between Deleuze’s discussion of money in *Cinema 2* and a theorization of money in finance capitalism, paying particular attention to the operation of money in times of financial crisis. Though Deleuze’s approach to the cinema marks a radical departure from the approach of the theorists I have been discussing thus far, his theorization of money expands and complicates the discussion we saw in Metz’s writing. As Deleuze famously remarks in *Cinema 2*:

The cinema as art itself lives in relation with a permanent plot, an international conspiracy that conditions it from within, as the most intimate and most indispensable enemy. This conspiracy is that of money; what defines industrial art is not mechanical reproduction, but the internalized relation with money (Deleuze 1989, 77).

Here we see that film and money are not merely put into exchange through the psyche of the spectator, but that the cinema, as an industrial art, is itself conditioned by an internal relationship with money. At every moment, money is folded within the cinematic image. The relationship is not one of facsimile, as we saw in Metz, but one of an intimate and immanent correspondence of forms.

What is imperative to my project is to transform Deleuze’s suggestion into a systematic analysis of the relationship between moving image production and finance capitalism. In this sense, I am arguing for a more nuanced terminology that elaborates on the relationship between film and money as representational forms and that these histories have followed very similar trajectories in the Twentieth Century. In this way, any theory of the relationship between film and finance would need to develop a terminology specific to finance capitalism, turning credit, inflation, and financial liquidity into historical and formal concepts relevant to the discussion of film. Long stuck in either an interrogation of the commodity form, or empirical studies of economies of film production and distribution,

a Marxist analysis of moving images at our contemporary moment must develop a more nuanced theory of the relationship between cinematic images and capitalist forms, particularly money.<sup>4</sup>

To begin, in *Cinema 1* Deleuze goes to great lengths to insist that the camera acts as the ‘general equivalent’ of the movement-image, always grounding its image in the sensory-motor schema of the Whole (1986, 22). Though I believe Gilles Deleuze’s writings on cinema are greatly influenced, if only negatively, by the theorists discussed above, one of the great contributions of his two books on cinema is that they immediately sever any notion of the camera eye and the camera-‘I’, that is, a particularly human form of vision that is grounded in identifactory subjective structures. Though this whole is not the same as the Sum of the movement of images within which the subject is sutured, it is the whole that subordinates each image to its motion, giving way to an indirect image of time. By insisting that the movement image is the ‘general equivalent’ of locomotion, Deleuze produces a structure that is similar to the camera-‘I’ discussed previously. A key difference in his thought, however, is that the general equivalent of locomotion is not necessarily an anthropomorphized subject: ‘the sole cinematographic consciousness is not us, the spectator, nor the hero; it is the camera—sometimes human, sometimes inhuman, sometimes superhuman’ (Deleuze 1986, 20). The continuity between Deleuze and his psychoanalytic predecessors, however, is that he employs the logic of the general equivalent when speaking of the movement-image. An understanding of the structure of the general equivalent illuminates his discussion of the internalized relationship of film to money in *Cinema 2*.

Famously, Deleuze argues that in the transition from the action-image to the time-image evident in Wenders’s *oeuvre*, film is forced to confront its internal limit: money. Deleuze employs this reading of Wenders to propose a powerful thesis regarding the connection between the time-image and money. He argues that the dissymmetry between camera and money—legible in the time-image—makes the insidious character of money’s form evident: ‘not the C-M-C that is equivalence, but the M-C-M that is the impossible equivalence or tricked, dissymmetrical exchange’ (Deleuze 1989, 78). He continues:

In short, *the cinema confronts its most internal presupposition, money, and the movement-image makes way for the time-image in the same operation*. What the film within the film expresses is the infernal circuit between image and money, this inflation which time

<sup>4</sup> Even Jonathan Beller’s *The Cinematic Mode of Production: Attention Economy and the Society of the Spectacle*, which takes great lengths towards a new Marxist approach to the political economy of cinema, relies heavily on both a critique of the commodity form (drawing on Debord’s theory of the spectacle) and the psychoanalytic theory of subjective identification as it develops a critical model for thinking about that which he terms the cinema’s ‘attention economy’ (2006).

puts into exchange, this ‘overwhelming rise.’ The film is movement, but the film within a film is money, is time (Deleuze 1989, 78).

This amazing exposition of the old adage ‘time is money’ allows Deleuze to connect a shift in aesthetics—the emergence of the time-image—to the historical condition of money in late-capitalism. It is not the commodity form that conditions this image, but money that ‘puts time into circulation.’ Though not explicit, by illustrating his point in terms of inflation—the characteristic tendency of money detached from a general equivalent—Deleuze references this historical transition in his conceptualization of the time-image. An impossibility grounds the new relationship between camera and money: the impossibility for money to function in relation a general equivalent. In other words, money shows itself to be direct dissymmetry. In this way, the movement-image and the time-image, according to Deleuze, are structured like two different monetary forms, corresponding, exactly, to the two different forms that they take in the history of the Twentieth Century.

Deleuze’s turn to a discussion of money, rather than the commodity, in relation to the time-image is here central. It opens with possibility of thinking the image along with forms of credit and debt that have become critical to the functioning of capital markets since the end of the 1970s. In the wake of the 2008 crisis, social theorists from across disciplines have begun to emphasize the importance of understanding relations of credit and debt as crucial to the production of social relations, dynamics of power, and life itself within contemporary capitalism.<sup>5</sup> While theories of credit and debt abound in our present, it is perhaps Karl Marx’s basic explication of credit-money that best illuminates my point. The rise of a specific function of money which Marx calls ‘credit-money’ both parallels and intensifies the historical trajectory of finance capitalism. In *Capital, Volume 1*, Marx makes the distinction between means of purchase and means of payment: a distinction that helps us better understand the function of money in finance capitalism. Means of purchase, for Marx, is the most basic mode in which commodities circulate: one commodity is directly exchanged for another, thus money immediately purchases goods. Money, in this sense, has intrinsic value that is congealed in its metal form, most often gold. Its value is more stable in this form, and thus hoarding and stockpiling the universal equivalent, gold, becomes a form of greed that guarantees the means of purchase.

Money’s function as a means of payment, however, introduces the temporality of debt into the circulation of money whereby ‘the seller sells an

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<sup>5</sup> For two recent contributions to the discussion of credit and debt in contemporary culture see: Maurizio Lazzarato (2012) *The Making of the Indebted Man: An Essay on the Neoliberal*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e). and David Graeber (2011) *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*. New York: Melville House.

existing commodity, and the buyer buys as the mere representative of money, or rather as the representative of future money. The seller becomes a creditor and the buyer a debtor' (Marx 1977, 233). The means of payment, for Marx, thus gives money an entirely new function. Rather than being tied to a precious metal such as gold, its relative value is substantiated by a relationship that endures in time: the time of circulation. One might even say that credit money puts time itself into exchange, a point emphasized by Rudolph Hilferding in his attempt to elaborate on Marx's discussion of finance capital in 1914. In this way, hoarding is a secondary function as the value of money is detached from the circulation of commodities and moves semi-indifferently to the retail value of the means of purchase which gold itself substantiates. Marx calls 'credit-money' money that

springs directly out of the function of money as means of payment, in that certificates of debt owing for already purchased commodities themselves circulate for the purpose of transferring those debts to others... the function of money as means of payment undergoes expansion in proportion as the system of credit itself expands (Marx 1977, 235).

Credit-money, unlike regulated money, always has the tendency of global circulation because it creates an ever-expanding flow (Marx 1977, 238). We might say, then, that in 1971 when Richard Nixon detached the dollar from the gold standard, he completed a process that had begun much earlier. The end of the gold standard confirmed the dominance of credit-money and the complete subsumption of labor power itself into the logic of finance capital.

The emergence of finance capitalism is a tendency that has had many historical moments of ascendancy and foreclosure before coming to complete dominance of the world system. This is much like the time-image as Deleuze describes it. Being a tendency within film as an industrial art (and thus conditioned by an internalized relationship to money), the time-image experiences an upsurge in different places at different times, immanently connected to the conditions of production out of which it is born. Although cinematic and financial crises are not always coincidental, they share a good deal. The constant circulation, or the flow, of credit-money in finance capitalism can be seen as correlated to the unhinged time image, leading to what Fredric Jameson, borrowing from Raymond Williams, calls the 'total flow' of the image in postmodernity.

The shift away from the movement-image—the camera-eye as 'general equivalent of locomotion'—that Deleuze notices is directly related of film's internalized relationship with money. New structures of power and control under contemporary capitalism give way to the erosion of the camera-eye and the introduction of new, powerful interactions between film and life. The regime of vision that implemented the golden mean that

produced a whole, unified subject gives way to a new system: the brain as the screen. As Deleuze notes,

the screen itself, even if it keeps its vertical position by convention, no longer seems to refer to the human posture, like a window or a painting, but rather constitutes a table of information, an opaque surface on which are inscribed 'data', information replacing nature, and the brain-city, the third eye, replacing the eyes of nature (1989, 265).

### **The Dead Eye: *Psycho* and the 'Gold Window'**

If the end of the camera-eye is induced by crisis, I would like to look more closely at what Deleuze calls 'the crisis of the action-image' through cinema's internalized relationship with money in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Deleuze argues that although Hitchcock does not allow for the complete rupture and crisis of the action-image, he pushes it to its limit, thus 'completing' it by introducing the mental relations into the image (Deleuze 1986, 201). *Psycho*, like many of Hitchcock's films, is about cinematic voyeurism: a film about film that interrogates the very mechanisms of cinematic vision. I would argue, however, that it is through an engagement with money—or, more concretely, through its camera-money exchange—that *Psycho* is able to comment on film and illustrate the collapse of an entire mode of cinematic vision. As Deleuze writes in *Cinema 2*, 'money is the obverse of all the images that cinema shows and sets in place, so that films about money are already, if implicitly, films about film,' while, at the same time, 'what the film within the film expresses is this infernal circuit between image and money' (1989, 77-8). What *Psycho* expresses—at the level of the mental relation—is the camera-money exchange that most absolutely characterizes the movement-image, but also pushes the camera's role as the general equivalent of motion to its absolute limit, completely detaching it from human vision.

In her seminal essay, 'Suture,' Kaja Silverman contends that *Psycho* 'deliberately exposes the negations on which filmic plenitude is predicated. It unabashedly foregrounds the voyeuristic components of the cinematic experience (...) forcing the viewer into an uncomfortable position which they produce' (1986, 222). For Silverman, the system of suture is the process in which 'the subject inserts itself into the symbolic register in the guise of the signifier, and in doing so gains meaning at the expense of being' (1986, 219). In *Psycho*, this system is writ large in that the abstraction of the camera from any particular character further indebts the subject to the 'Absent-One' (Silverman 1986, 224). Focused on the chain of identifications that the subject is forced to make, and the relentless substitution of characters and objects, Silverman insists that the viewer is destabilized only to further embed it into the system of suture propelled by its own desire for narrative closure.

The opening sequence of *Psycho* begins with an establishing shot of Phoenix, a perfectly generic post-war cityscape. The camera pans across the city skyline before locating a building and entering it through a window in an almost seamless series of shots. Upon entering, we find our temporary heroine lying on a bed gazing upwards at her lover. A few shots later, the camera shifts and we see her back, and also the view out the window, as she laments that the 'time is up' at the hotel and she must return to the office. Silverman writes of this opening 'trick shot' that, 'the viewing subject is made acutely aware of the impossibility of this shot—not just the technical, but the 'moral' impossibility, since the shot in question effects a startling breach of privacy' (1986, 223). Her insistence that the shot must be measured by its 'impossibility' in relation to human vision allows an understanding of this sequence as affected by a conflation of the transcendental camera-eye with the transcendent subject. In contrast, I would argue that Hitchcock is employing the camera in the Vertovian tradition, in which the camera functions to 'carry perception into things, to put perception into matter... thus in this respect all procedures are legitimate, they are no longer trick shots' (Deleuze 1986, 81). With this shot, Hitchcock utilizes the non-human power of the perception-image to produce the mental-image.

Shortly after the opening sequence, Marion is back in her office where the \$40,000 that initiates the narrative is introduced. As the drunken man waves the money in her face, her gaze falls nervously on it. The tension in the office that is produced by the \$40,000 is due to the fact that it is anachronistic to purchase anything as significant as a house with cash. This is why her boss insists she remove the money from the office immediately. The money, out of place as a means of purchase, is set again into circulation by Marion as a kind of down payment on rest of the film, starting the irreversible flow of the narrative.

The sequence that follows is one of the most telling in the film. The motion of Marion's exit from the office to the right of the frame is perfectly matched by her entrance from the left in the next scene, except that she is, again, only partially clothed and in the private space of her bedroom. This cut illustrates the camera's complete independence: its ability to move seamlessly from the exterior world to the interior of domestic space. Before reaching into a closet, she glances nervously at the bed. Without cutting, the camera moves slightly upwards to reveal the object of her glance: the envelope of money. The eye line match with the money is intensified as the camera shifts down again, foregrounding the money while Marion turns away, making it appear as if the money is the origin of the camera's gaze. This association is intensified as the camera pans left, revealing Marion's open suitcase on the bed. Silverman argues that this shot and the sequence that ensues further reveal the system of suture:

by privileging the point of view of an inanimate object, Hitchcock makes us acutely aware of what Oudart would call the ‘Absent One’—i.e., of the speaking subject. Our relationship with the camera remains unmediated, ‘unsoftened’ by the intervention of the human gaze (Silverman 1986, 224).

To the contrary, I would argue that not only is it significant that this inanimate object which is associated with the camera’s gaze is money, but that this camera-money assemblage forces the mental association which frames the entire shot. It is as if the money shows its own fate: to finance Marion’s flight. As we saw from the opening sequence of the film, the camera does not need a human, or any other object to ground its movement. Its use of the money, here, is to create an image that produces a set of relations: ‘Hitchcock’s single shot subordinates that whole (relations) to the frame... action, and also perception and affection, are framed within a fabric of relations. It is this chain of relations that constitutes the mental image’ (Deleuze 1986, 200). It is the camera-money exchange that reveals an impending danger. This exchange reveals that Marion is not simply the cause of this narrative tension, but that she is merely one component within a larger system that guides her fate. Furthermore, Deleuze argues that, in Hitchcock’s films,

[e]ach image in its frame, by its frame, must exhibit a mental relation. The characters can act, perceive, experience, but they cannot testify to the relations that determine them. These are merely the movements of the camera, and their movements towards the camera (Deleuze 1986, 201).

Fulfilling its role as the general equivalent of motion, the camera is not situated as the ‘I’ of transcendence, but as the mediator of relations. It determines the relations of the film, and shows, on the level of a mental relation, the function of the camera in the movement-image. By bringing the relations of the whole to the level of the shot in *Psycho*, the camera reveals its relationship not with the speaking subject, but instead, with determining relations: in other words, with money.

Marion’s murder halfway through the film is perhaps one of the most disorienting moments in classical Hollywood cinema. After the jarring shower scene breaks, we see a shot of water flowing down the drain. The camera lingers on this shot, and then slowly dissolves into a shot of Marion’s dead pupil. The visual transition is so smooth that it almost appears as if Marion’s dead eye and the drain are the same object. This visually recalls the last action we see Marion perform: flushing her torn up financial balance sheet down the toilet before entering the shower. This ‘impossible’ shot visually associates her eye with the flushing mechanism of the toilet: the receptor for the calculations of money she needs to repay to

take it, and herself, out of circulation. Through this association, her dead eye indicates that the money she owes will never be re-paid, at least not in her lifetime. After lingering on her eye, the camera moves out to expose her once again before slowly panning to the object of her dead gaze: the money sitting on the bedside table. After resting on the money, the camera continues to pan to the window through which we see the murderer's house and through which, we can assume, (s)he entered.

Silverman insists that this tracking shot offers the viewer relief, that 'the \$40, 000 assures us that there is more to follow, and that even though we have just lost our heroine, we can afford to finance others... our investment in the fiction is made manifest through the packet of money which provides an imaginary bridge from Marion to the next protagonist' (Silverman 1986, 227). Silverman is correct here, to a certain degree, but she stops short of carrying this analysis through to its most radical conclusion. The money does not merely imply that the spectators can afford to finance the future of the film. What this shot illustrates most dramatically, it seems, is the power of Hitchcock's relation-image to comment on film itself. Though much has been said regarding Hitchcock's association of the window with screen, especially in regards to *Rear Window*, I would like to return to this idea. The shot of Marion's corpse is an exact reversal of the opening shot of the film in which the camera penetrates the open window revealing Marion's gaze upward at her lover. The dead eye—associated with the drain—lands upon the money and then the window, once again detaching the camera from any notion of human vision. Like in the first sequence, when Marion gazes out the window announcing that the 'time is up' at the hotel, her dead gaze declares the same thing. The sovereign gaze through the window, the 'mirror of the clear glass,' is reserved for the camera alone. The camera-money exchange has become the only relation that moves through the window. Deleuze argues that Hitchcock refuses to finish what he started, bringing about the absolute crisis of the movement-image and completely de-linking the sensor-motor apparatus which grounds it. Nevertheless, *Psycho* seems to announce that time for the movement-image, too, is up.

### **The Living Brain: Control and the 'de-linking of the sensory-motor apparatus'**

In his essay 'Postscript on Control Societies', Deleuze notes that the prominent feature of emergent forms of power is the incessant 'breaking down of interiors,' through which the disciplinary subject moved throughout the course of its life, such as family, school, army, and factory (1990, 178). In societies of control, the subject is no longer individuated within the masses, but becomes an 'open site of control,' a broken down interior, a 'dividual.' This dividual, Deleuze writes, is an operation of financial systems:

Money, perhaps, best expresses the difference between the two kinds of society, since discipline was always related to molded currencies containing gold as a numerical standard, whereas control is based on floating exchange rates, modulations depending on a code setting sample percentages for various currencies (Deleuze 1990, 180).

Following Deleuze's account of the transformation of life within societies of control indicated by new monetary forms, I would like to argue that the 'closure of the gold window' indicates, even further, how closely money and the image are related in late capitalism, producing a 'move toward replacing the system of a window and the world outside with one of a computer screen in a closed room.' The subject grounded in the cinematic apparatus—and the equation of the camera-eye with the human eye—allowed for a molded subject for which vision had a constitutional function, mediating and distinguishing interior from exterior. The true significance of the brain as screen that Deleuze hints at in *Cinema 2*, it seems, is only realized five years later, in this short, enigmatic piece on control. The concept of the brain-screen as an ontological regime of the cinematic image is the most adequate aesthetic corollary to the historical moment when mechanisms of control come to dominate the whole of life. Where earlier theories of cinema envisage a subject of cinema (and implicitly of money) that reproduces the logic of the general equivalent, Deleuze's theory of the brain-screen presents a kind of 'postscript' on the camera-eye that accounts for new technologies of power within finance capitalism.

In an interview with Antonio Negri, 'Control and Becoming,' published the same year as 'Postscript on Control Societies,' Deleuze argues that it is not the subject we need to understand, but the brain as a process of subjectification: 'the brain's precisely the boundary of continuous two-way movement between Inside and Outside, this membrane between them' (Deleuze 1990, 176). Following from this conception of the brain, in finance capitalism the brain is the screen, and the cinematic image, life, and money are so deeply enmeshed that they become indiscernible.

When speaking of the brain, Deleuze is referencing the most material and concrete biological functions: its 'circuits' (Deleuze 1990, 61). It is these 'circuits,' conceived of as material connections, which must be drawn out in conducting numismatics of film life. The materiality of these forces and their nexus within the cinematic image expose underlying forms of life generated within contemporary capitalism. The time-image, with its ability to de-link the sensory-motor apparatus, needs to be seen both as a radical break and as the creation of new political possibilities, as Deleuze clearly illustrates in *Cinema 2*. In addition, however, the creation of new circuits through which power can operate—the brain as a screen—is adequate to the modular functioning of control societies. In realizing the Cartesian window to the world, the cinematic image precipitates its

undoing, and the closure of the gold window points to an ambivalence within film as an industrial art: its flexibility and adaptability to the functioning of systems of control. Furthermore, the task of understanding the function of visual economies in our present must take into account the immanent relationship between cinema and money and the financial logics that structure this relationship.

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